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TRAVELLERS' CHIT-CHAT.

TRAVELLERS' rooms and the saloons of steam-vessels occasionally present specimens of a kind of conversation, which, though bald and uninforming in the highest degree, often furnishes me with more entertainment than I would expect from the colloquies of a Coleridge and a Wilson.* A pair of gentlemen who are strangers to each other, fall into talk. Fearful to hit upon some topic which may not be pleasing to each other from profession, connections, or politics, they restrict themselves to commonplace and threadbare subjects, in which it is inconceivable that either can feel the least interest, but which they nevertheless discuss with an air of the most profound gravity. On they will thus go for hours, apparently quite content with the conversation; and when they at last rise to go upon deck, it is with a look of the greatest possible edification. Such a conversation as this I lately overheard at the dinner-table of a steam-vessel, the interlocutors being a young gentleman and a young lady—no particular sort of persons, but simply a young gentleman and a young lady. I shall do my best to report in eclogue fashion what was said, not unhoping that my hero and heroine will be thought about as rational as any Menalcas or Amaryllis of them all.

Young Gentleman. "Please, ma'am, a little tongue to your fowl?"

Young Lady. "Much obliged. Thank you, sir."

"Our voyage promises to be a pleasant one."

"I think it does, sir."

"Are you a good sailor, ma'am?"

"Oh no—such a bad one. I hope it won't be stormy, or I shall be so ill. I know I shall."

"Were you ever in any of the steamers which go to the Mediterranean?"

"Oh no."

"You have no idea of sea-sickness here, ma'am. The Bay of Biscay is the place for sea-sickness. The vessels are much larger than these. The *Tagus*, for instance, has a cabin which dines a hundred passengers with comfort. She goes to Gibraltar. The fare is eighteen guineas."

"How expensive!"

"Yes, indeed, for only six days, or so. But then the wines are superb. Champagne every day at dinner. Finger-dishes, too, always put down."

"They give very good provisions on board the vessels between Leith and London. The charge is three pounds."

"Yes; I went down in one of them about three weeks ago. The *Monarch* is a very good vessel, and Captain Bain a fine old fellow. We did it in forty-one hours."

"Then I suppose you have been spending some time in Scotland?"

"Only making a little tour in the Highlands. I have had very bad weather. Rain every day almost."

"Where did you go?"

"I went to the Trosachs, Dunkeld, and Inverness. I also saw Abbotsford and Melrose. I could only spend a day in Edinburgh."

"Have you been pleased upon the whole?"

"Y-es—tolerably. Disappointed in Abbotsford. The house is paltry. They show his coat and walking shoes, and his hat nailed against the wall. The show-rooms are fine, but the bed-rooms very little, and poorly furnished. Melrose was much less than I expected. After Tintern or Farnival, it is nothing. All the Scotch geese are swans now. Edinburgh is a pretty town, but the winds are cruelly cold. I had a bad day for the Trosachs, and saw nothing but mist

and a few bushes. Dunkeld is a pretty place. I came round by Staffa and Iona. Staffa very fine, but the boatmen charge dreadfully for rowing in. I was last at Glasgow. It is a fine city, but there is no place any where like London. I am returning there by Liverpool."

"I suppose you will go by the railway?"

"I intend so. I am told you now breakfast at Liverpool, and get to a late dinner in London. They only take nine or ten hours."

"What a wonderful thing steam is!"

"Yes, ma'am. You may really say that. Who could have thought of all this a few years ago? Railways will soon be every where. You may whirl round the island in a day. Steam-navigation is also going to a great pitch. I have a friend in the Great Western this last trip. He has accepted an invitation to dine in New York on the 6th of next month. No fear he will be there in time, for he sailed on the 20th of this. Average passage fourteen days. I hear the company has advertised her days of sailing for the next four years. The fare is very high—thirty-five pounds. But opposition will soon bring it down. When it is twenty, I shall go and see the Yankees myself."

"Nothing like opposition for bringing down prices."

"Very true, ma'am. But opposition sometimes does mischief too. When I was at Dunkeld, there were opposition coaches to Perth, going at the same hours. The fare had been three shillings, which was a fair thing for fifteen miles. The new coach ran at one shilling, and the old coach now did the same. One had placards with NO MONOPOLY in large letters. The other had a flag with the words, THE OLD DUKE FOR EVER, for it was called the Duke of Atholl. When they started, you can't imagine what a splutter they made. The coachmen swore at each other like maniacs. Off they went at a gallop, quite heedless of danger, while all the people stood looking after them in wonder. The old Duke said he was determined to run the opposition off the road; but one day he was literally run off the road himself by the other, and landed with all his passengers in a ditch, so much shattered that he could not show face again for a week. It will come to claymores at last, I believe."

"Bless me, that is dreadful."

"They give fine breakfasts in the Highlands, ma'am. I liked the fish and the honey. But I have not got reconciled to the mountain dew as yet. It tastes so harsh. The Highland inns are very good. We never wanted for any thing any where. The Caledonian Hotel at Inverness is a superb house. I could not have believed it. Were you ever at Plymouth, ma'am?"

"No."

"The Royal Hotel there is, I dare say, the largest and finest in the world. It is so large that a theatre about the size of the Haymarket is only a part of it. It also contains a splendid ball-room. The stables would, I am certain, accommodate two hundred horses; and they make down from sixty-five to seventy beds. It is like a town in itself."

"Bless me!"

"It is surprising, ma'am. One feels quite lost in such a house. But it is a comfortable hotel too—the greatest attention and civility to every body. When I was there once, I had to get up at five, to go off by coach at six. Well, there was a cup of hot coffee for me, just as if it had been any common house. No charge for it of course."

"That was very kind. I could not have expected it of such a house."

"The head waiter there makes a thousand pounds a-year, ma'am. He never wears any thing but one

of the best suits of black, with silk stockings. The gentlemen who frequent the house lately subscribed to present him with a piece of plate."

"Indeed. Is it common to do so?"

"Oh, bless you, yes, ma'am. Every kind of person gets presents of plate now-a-days. I expect to hear some day that the swell mob have subscribed for a testimonial to Jack Ketch, out of gratitude for the mild and gentlemanly manner in which he has for many years performed the duties of his critical and arduous office."

"You are satirical, I see."

"Oh, not at all, ma'am, I assure you—(smiling at the same time as if he thought he had been dreadfully so). Don't you see in the newspapers what a constant system of mutual present-giving there is in society? When I was last in Liverpool, all the walls were covered with a placard calling upon Ward 25 to come forward handsomely to aid in getting up a piece of plate for the commissioner. No junior usher's assistant can now do his duty without the same being acknowledged by the boys, in a snuff-box purchased by a tax upon their pocket-money. It is one of the manias of the day."

"I understand that young Kean is performing in Liverpool at present."

"Yes. He is a favourite there."

"He is also a great favourite in Edinburgh."

"I believe so. So he was too with a large part of the Londoners, but not all of them. I think Hamlet his finest character."

"That is generally allowed. I like his Othello too."

"His Othello is good, and so is his Sir Giles Overreach, but not so good. He bears a high private character."

"Have you seen Mr Wilson, the vocalist?"

"Hundreds of times. Delightful singer, and acts with some spirit, too, which few singers do. He is gone to America, I hear. Jonathan takes away all our best performers. He pays so much better than we do. He exports, too, however. Have you seen Hill, the trans-Atlantic comedian? He acts the New-England pedlar to the life. I have seen nothing for years to compare to it. Such a picture of brazen impudence and downright roguery, and yet all relieved by exquisite humour and pure drollery! Beats every thing, as he would say himself, to immortal smash. On first seeing him, I was so delighted that I went back next night to see the very same pieces—the only time I ever did such a thing in my life. An encore of the whole performance, I may call it."

"Have you travelled much, sir?"

"A little, ma'am. I was up the Mediterranean last year. The year before, I made a tour through France, Germany, and Holland. This year I have been to Scotland. I intend to go to Ireland next year. There is no merit in travelling now. Steam takes you every where. When I went away last year, I intended to go no farther than the south of Spain and Malta. But when I was at Malta, I was told I ought to visit Alexandria; and the steamer being ready, I popped in. When at Alexandria, every one said it would be absurd not to see Greece. So I crossed to Greece by another steamer. At Athens, every one said it would be unpardonable, since I had come so far, if I went home without taking a peep at Palestine. So I went by the steamer to Beyroot, and paid a visit to Damascus. From Damascus I went to Jerusalem, and then back to Beyroot, where I got a steamer for Malta, and thus found my way to England. I was away only three months in all, and my expenses were quite a trifle. I was led on through Europe in the same way. When at Paris, I thought it as well to go on to Geneva.

* That is to say, supposing there could have been any colloquy where the all-engrossing author of *Christabel* was concerned.

At Geneva, I was induced to proceed to Frankfort. When there, every one advised me to cross the Alps and see Milan. Here it was declared absurd to return without taking a few days at Rome. In coming back, I found it would be little more expensive to go by Venice. Then, it seemed so little out of my way that I could not resist the opportunity of looking in at Vienna. From Vienna I returned by Berlin and Hamburg, and I am sure I should have taken St Petersburg in my way home, if I had not received a letter informing me of the death of my father. This is the way people travel now-a-days. They set out with the old-fashioned ideas as to distance and that sort of thing, and when once away, find themselves led on by the very facility of travelling, almost against their will."

"I think you will like your visit to Ireland, sir."

"I dare say I shall, ma'am. Were you ever there?"

"Yes; I once spent a month with a friend in the county of Wicklow. I know many people in Dublin."

"I was once in Dublin myself, but never any where else in Ireland. It is a fine city, and contains some of the finest possible society. You say you know many people in it. May I inquire if you know the Macgillivuddies—they live in Sackville Street when in town, and have a villa at the Black Rock."

"No, I don't know them. I know the Fosters very well. They live in St Stephen's Green. Their country residence is in Wicklow, where I met them."

"I don't know the Fosters, but I have heard of them. Very pleasant people, I believe. I rather think my friend Murphy knew the Fosters very well. No, it wasn't Murphy; it was Emmanuel James Tighe. Tighe was once very intimate in the family. Did you know the Tighes, ma'am?"

"No, I never met them. I knew the Thundergasts very well. We went to the Dargle together. You did not visit the Dargle, I suppose?"

"No, that is a pleasure to come. They speak much of it in Dublin; but having seen Terni and Tivoli, I am prepared not to be much surprised."

"Still the Dargle is very fine. I visited it in delightful weather. We had a lunch beside the river from cold provisions which we had brought with us in the car. We went to the Devil's Glen in the same day. My Irish friends were very kind to me. They took me every where. They are such kind people in Ireland! Perhaps you would know the family I lived with—the O'Donnochie. They are county Kerry people, but reside in Wicklow."

"Oh yes, I met them in Dublin. The gentleman is very tall, is n't he? and the lady rather petite. They have a large family—two daughters grown up."

"Ah, yes. That is just the family. Did you see much of them?"

"No, I did n't. I was not introduced, but I remember the family well. Miss O'Donnochy played delightfully on the piano after dinner. Sang a little, too, I think. We had the 'Last Rose of Summer' first, and then 'When he who adores thee.' Her sister, I think, does n't play. I liked Miss O'Donnochy's style of singing. It is n't powerful. She has little voice; but what she has, she manages well. She sings with taste. I took the liberty, though not introduced, of asking her for 'Silent, oh Moyle,' but she told me she did n't sing it. I was sorry for that, for I think it one of the best of the Irish melodies."

"I am sorry you were not introduced to the O'Donnochie. They are a most amiable family. Mr O'Donnochy himself made a fortune in India, and married there. They have six children in all. The youngest are sweet loves. And Mrs O'Donnochy does take such care of them. She is one of the best of mothers. Young O'Donnochy is to go to India as soon as he is eighteen. He is a fine young man. Did you see him at your friend's house?"

"No, I think I heard he was in England at the time, on a visit. I overheard the Miss O'Donnochie say something of his return being immediately expected. And he is going to India, is he?"

"Yes; his father insists on that, though mamma does not like it. Mr O'Donnochy has a good fortune; but, having a number of daughters, he wishes his eldest son to do something for himself."

"Very right. When you were in Dublin, did you happen to meet the Tooleys? Mr Tooley is a counsellor. They live in Dawson Street."

"Yes, the Tooleys were intimate with the O'Donnochie. They visited us once during my stay."

"Ah, indeed. The Tooleys are my most particular friends. I was very much with them when in Dublin. They are charming people, the Tooleys. I was introduced to them by a letter from some London friends, and experienced the greatest kindness from them. Miss Tooley had just been married when I was there. I rather believe she has had two children since. Her husband's name is Hamilton—of a Scotch family originally. He has some office in the Castle."

"So I heard. I wonder if Miss Amelia Tooley has been married yet. She was spoken of with a Major Tillotson of the 24th. Her friends did not approve of it. They thought him gay; but she evidently liked him. Miss Amelia was a general favourite. She had the most brilliant execution on the harp of any young lady I ever knew. Do you happen to have heard any thing of her marriage?"

"I rather think she has not been married yet. I hear of the family occasionally from my London friend, and I am pretty sure it would have been mentioned, if any thing of the kind had taken place. I remember Tillotson in Cheltenham. He was extremely short-sighted. There was a capital joke about him when I was in Cheltenham. He came one day to a brother officer, and told him that he had found out two pretty girls in a barber's shop in one of the second-rate streets. He said he had been doing nothing since yesterday but walk up and down in front of the shop, trying to attract their attention. His brother officer went with him to the place to give his assistance, and found that Tillotson had been all the time making love to two female wax figures, which the barber had put up for the exhibition of his wigs. He was finely roasted for it at the mess."

How long this chat would have run on, I will not undertake to guess. It here experienced a dismal interruption from the growing squeamishness of the young lady, who had now to retire to the ladies' cabin, and give herself up to the tender care of the stewardess. The young man, who had very politely led her from the table, expressing much concern for her illness, immediately returned to the saloon, and resigned himself to silence, and the perusal of one of the volumes in the steamer library. I could not help wondering that he had not done so sooner, instead of drawing out a long dialogue about nothing. Surely, even the worst volume in the (as usual) ill-selected library of the steam-vessel, would have been at once more entertaining and instructive than this interminable tissue of bald and rapid prattle. Yet, again, on reflecting further, I felt reason to doubt if my first conclusion was right. The matter of the discourse was, it is true, purely trifling; but then it was accompanied by the charm which lies in human intercourse. Living mind was communing with living mind. The play of feature was there. There was also the pleasure of giving and receiving that courtesy which, arising from mutual respect, forms so large an element in the common enjoyments of life, in all but the humblest grades of society. In short, I saw that poor stuff became tolerable when it was presented in the shape of conversation. How far the same matter is to please in its reported form, is another question, and one which may well give me some concern. Let me hope that, as a picture, and a faithful one, of what occurs every day in the common intercourse of the world, it will have such a pretension to the approbation of the reader, as may in some degree make up for its essential insipidity.

THE ISLAND OF ST KILDA.

FROM its remote and solitary position in the Western or Atlantic Ocean, independently of any other circumstances, the island of St Kilda has always been an object of peculiar interest and curiosity to the people of Scotland, or rather of the British mainland generally. A little work, published by Mr M'Phun of Glasgow, and entitled "Sketches of the Island of St Kilda, &c., by L. Maclean," enables us to present some information of a very recent character regarding St Kilda, the writer of the production in question having visited the island personally in July of the present year, 1838. Dr Maculloch's account of the island puts it in our power, at the same time, to compare its past with its existing condition.

St Kilda lies to the north-west of North Uist and Harris, at a distance of about sixty miles from these islands, and in latitude 57 degrees 56 minutes north, and longitude 10 degrees 3 minutes west from Greenwich. The nearest point of mainland is about one hundred miles from the island, which measures three miles in length and two in breadth. St Kilda does not stand precisely alone in the ocean. It is the centre of a little group of isles, or more properly rocks, which are known by the names of Soa, Borera, Stacca-biorrach, and Staclia. The two last of these are merely pointed rocks, less than a quarter of a mile in circumference, and inhabited only by wild-fowl; while the first-named two extend to nearly a mile in circumference, and maintain a few sheep. Though visited at fixed seasons by the people of the main island, there are no permanent residents on any of these minor members of the group.

Except on the eastern side, where there is a small

bay with a low beach, St Kilda is surrounded by a perpendicular line of rocks, in some places as high as fifteen hundred feet. It presents to the view six hills, of various degrees of elevation, and exhibits throughout scenery of a sublimely precipitous character. According to Dr Maculloch, the rocks of the island are all of modern volcanic origin, consisting principally of a dark trap rock and syenite. As no stratified rocks have been yet seen, however, the age of the island is merely a matter of conjecture. Various caves are visible in the course of the rocky barrier forming the shores; and some of these, according to Mr Maclean's work, perforate the island through its whole extent. The excavation of these passages is ascribed to the great force of the Atlantic wave, which, finding no previous obstacle in its whole route from the North American coasts, breaks at length with tremendous force on the rocks of St Kilda, throwing its spray over the lofty rampart, and "hurling stones, or rather fragments of rock, some of them twenty, and some twenty-four tons in weight, as if in hope to push the island from its seat." By the incessant operation of the waters, great caves have been formed in the face of the island cliffs—so large, it is said, that a vessel might sail into them.

St Kilda is supposed to have been peopled in the ninth century by the Macleods of Harris, in the possession of whose chieftain it still remains. There is a curious tradition relative to the first colonisation of the island. The people of Harris and of Uist were both desirous of possessing it, and, in order to determine the proprietorship, an agreement was made, that two boats, one from Harris and one from Uist, should start at the same moment for the island, and that the party which first touched the shores should be declared victorious, and be acknowledged lords of St Kilda. The boats set off, and kept close to each other during the whole race. But, on nearing the wished-for land, the Uist men had got a few strokes ahead, and would most certainly have gained the prize, had not Colla Macleod, leader of the Harris men, chopped off his left hand by the wrist, and tossed it ashore over the heads of the adverse party. By this act the Macleods became possessors of St Kilda, and remain so till this day. The history of the island, from that time downwards, presents no occurrences of interest, until Martin, author of a well-known work on the Hebrides, visited the place in 1697. The inhabitants, who were direct descendants of the primitive settlers, were instructed by Martin in a purer form of Christian worship than they had previously known. Six years afterwards, the General Assembly sent a clergyman to the island. With the exception of a two years' interval, this gentleman remained in St Kilda up to the period of his death, which took place in 1730. For a long time afterwards, the island was only occasionally visited by a Christian teacher. But, in 1830, the Rev. Mr Mackenzie took up his abode on this wild rock, and there he yet remains, pursuing with honourable zeal his self-denying task. Such are the principal events in the history of St Kilda, and we shall now advert to the details of its present condition, and the customs of its inhabitants, as described by Mr Maclean and others who have visited it.

The point where vessels touch at the island is the bay already alluded to, which is sheltered on three quarters of the compass by lofty rocks, the highest point of which stands 1380 feet above the level of the sea. The bay, which stretches inwards for about a quarter of a mile, is of a semicircular shape, and opens to the south-east. "It presents (says Mr Maclean) at the curve a pretty sandy beach, where, at low water, children might play; but above this shore, at high-water mark, as well as round the whole bay, presents what are ironically called Doirneagan Hirt (St Kilda pebbles) over all the high lands. These large stones are natives of the abyss profound, cast up here by the angry waves. The size of some of them I by no means exaggerated, when I called them twenty-four tons in weight. I never would have believed them to be moveables, if the clergyman had not pointed out to us what progress they had been forced to make even in his own time." On reaching St Kilda, "you naturally look for the houses of the natives, but you overlook them, till some one tells you that those are they, like a cluster of bee-skeps, two hundred yards westward in the centre of the glen, and rising up from the shore." Though, at the first glance over the island scenery, the houses may be overlooked, this is not the case with buildings of another kind, which stud the surface of the island thickly, and amount in all to about five thousand in number. "They are round when on the summit of a hill, or upon a level, but of an oval shape when on the side of a hill; they may be from eight to ten feet in diameter, and from three to four in height; are rather ingeniously built of dry stone, gradually diminishing till the top is closed by larger stones, which again are covered with turf." The purpose of these buildings is to hold the winter stores of turf, hay, corn, barley, and also the salted birds, which constitute a great portion of the food of the inhabitants. The hills on which these buildings form such remarkable objects, slope upwards from the sea, behind and on all sides of the

village, and are bare of vegetation, having been pared all over to provide fuel.

The dwelling-houses, so insignificant at a little distance, do not improve upon a closer acquaintance. They are usually of an oval shape, and are constructed of rough stones, intermixed with a little earth, by way of mortar. The walls are from five to eight feet thick, about five feet high on the outside, with one door and no windows. Three feet is the usual height of the door-lintel. The inside of the building is divided by a partition of loose stones into two crescent-shaped apartments, the largest diameter of which measures about nine feet. The outermost of these divisions, or the one nearest the door, is appropriated to the cattle in winter, and the other is reserved for the family. Speaking of one of these St Kilda houses, Mr Maclean says, "Opposite the door I observed a pit, cave, or grave, about five feet into the wall, and considerably below the level of the floor. This is the only bed in the house. The host and his daughter crept in at its contracted stone entrance, at my request, to show how they slept, and laughed heartily at our surprise." One of the most remarkable points about these houses, is the use their floors and roofs are put to, in the collection of *manure*. Immediately after the people have put manure on the land for one year, they begin to collect more for next season. They gather peat-dust and ashes on the floors of their houses, and these materials they moisten by throwing on them dirty water and more unpleasant fluids. By these means the floor rises in height till it is equal with the side-walls, so that in the beginning of summer a person cannot stand upright in any of their houses, but must creep on all-fours round the fire! For similar purposes the smoke is confined in these dwellings until the soot is collected in heaps on the roofs. Only once a-year are these foul abodes cleaned out! On the outside, these houses are rendered equally disagreeable by another cause. Solan geese, gulls, and other birds, are stuck by the bills into crannies of the walls, in order that their feathers may be dried previous to being plucked. The carcasses soon putrify; and the consequence is, that no visitor can approach these houses without annoyance and disgust, so strong is the fetid effluvia pervading the atmosphere around.

Who and what, the reader may be inclined to ask, are the unhappy creatures that dwell in these styes? There are twenty-six of these houses in St Kilda, occupied by the same number of families; in all, the population amounts to ninety-two persons, exclusive of the six persons who compose the minister's family, and who are not natives. At the period of Martin's visit, in 1691, the population was nearly twice what it now is. When Dr Macculloch was on the island twenty years ago, there were one hundred and three inhabitants. The first and greatest of these declensions is to be ascribed to epidemics, which are fearfully destructive when they reach St Kilda, and one of which almost depopulated the island eighty years ago. But even without the operation of such violent diseases, there seem to be causes in continual operation in St Kilda, of sufficient force to prevent the population from at least ever increasing. Eight out of every ten children die between the eighth and twelfth days of their existence! Unquestionably, the great, if not the only cause of this lamentable mortality, is the filth amid which they live, and the noxious effluvia which pervade their houses. The air of the island is good, and the water excellent; in short, there is no visible defect on the part of nature. Moreover, the clergyman, who lives exactly as those around him do, in every respect excepting as regards the condition of his house, has a family of four children, who are all well and healthy. The smoke and the beds, one would almost think, are alone sufficient to kill the new-born infants of St Kilda. The full wretchedness of Lady Grange's fate, who was confined for seven years to this island, is only understood on looking at the accommodations of these houses.*

There are other causes, certainly, which tend to keep down the population, but in a lesser degree. There are lives occasionally lost in the perilous calling to which the people of St Kilda particularly devote themselves. This is the taking of birds and eggs upon the precipitous cliffs of St Kilda and the adjacent isles. The solan goose is the king of the St Kilda birds, and exists on the rocks in innumerable quantities. It comes in fine condition to these isles in January and February, and goes away about the end of summer—whither, the natives know not. In the middle of March, the islanders, who have but one pretty large boat in their possession, sail by moonlight to the foot of the cliffs, and send a party up to take the birds. The geese have a sentinel set regularly to watch, and if the climbers do not kill this bird before it can give the alarm, all the birds will rise and fly. But if the sentinel be surprised, then the climbers have nothing to do but to seize as many birds as they like, and twist their necks. The boat, it is said, will often come back in the morning with *seven tons!* The numbers of fowl are so enormous as to render this perfectly credible, and the young ones are so stupid

that they will sit to be killed in boat-loads. The fulmer, another bird about the size of a herring gull, is still more sought after by the inhabitants, and may be called their staff of life, being their chief provision, in a salted and barrelled state, through the winter. On the 12th of August, the climbers go to the rocks for the fulmer, which is much more difficult to be got at than the solan goose. Ropes, made chiefly of salted cow-hide thongs, are attached to the waists of the most active men, and thus they descend the rocks, till they reach the young fulmers. After their necks are twisted, the birds are thrown to an accessible spot, and sometimes twenty thousand are killed in one week. They weigh from two to three pounds. Another bird, called the scrabaire, or scraper, is killed by dogs, which are trained to enter the burrows of the bird. The guillemot and kittiwake are two other creatures which are used as food. Eagles, hawks, plovers, crows, &c. are also found in great numbers on St Kilda.

The young and eggs of these birds being, both in a fresh and salted state, the chief food used on the island, and their feathers being the coin in which the rent of the island (L.40) is paid by common contribution, as well as the material which yields the people beds, and partly dress, it may be supposed, that to be a good cragsman is the great aim, merit, and boast of a St Kilda islander. Lives are occasionally lost, as already stated, in these pursuits, and this may help to keep down the population, as the loss of even one man tells on so small a community. The men of St Kilda are not unhealthy looking. Their dress is a jacket, trousers, and waistcoat, of a kind of cloth manufactured by themselves. They go generally bareheaded and barefooted, and it is worthy of note that their great toes are widely separated from the others, through the necessity of often resting their whole weight on that part of the foot in climbing. The women are not so well looking as the men, and wear a coarse loose garment, fastened by two ropes round the body. The children are mostly active and even handsome creatures; a circumstance probably to be ascribed to the deplorable fact that the weakly have no chance of above one week's life. Generally, the people are well disposed, simple, and hospitable beings.

The agriculture of St Kilda is limited to a narrow spot of land near the village, where oats, barley, and a few potatoes, are raised by the islanders, who hold the land according to the old and barbarous system of run-rig. A few sheep, goats, and black cattle, graze on the heights, and supply occasional food to the inhabitants, as well as enable them to manufacture cheese, which they sometimes export to the mainland. "Distillation (says Dr Macculloch) is unknown here, and the use of spirits equally so." By this we presume it is meant that spirits are not in general use, for, in referring to a marriage on the island, Mr Maclean (or his informant) says that the company drank to the bride's health in "spirits," and at a future part of his narrative he mentions having given a glass of spirits to four young boatmen, who had never tasted the liquor before. Possibly some families may keep spirits for rare occasions. The mode in which the natives are supplied with lights in their dark cottages, is curious. The neck of the fulmer contains a species of oil, which is carefully extracted on the capture of these birds. A hollow stone is filled with this oil, and a burning peat thrown into it, by which means the light is long sustained. As no wood grows in the island, peat and turf supply materials for the fires of St Kilda, and, fortunately, there is a considerable quantity of peat on the highest ridge of the island. Much of this peat is consumed in the manufacture of salt, a process (says Macculloch) which forms part of the necessary economy of every cottage. Another domestic operation of importance is the working of the quern or hand-mill, by which the islanders grind all their corn. A pestle and mortar will give a good idea of this machine, which is always wrought by women.

Notwithstanding those peculiarities of their dwellings which appear to visitors intolerable discomforts, the people of St Kilda are a happy, contented race. They have abundance of good food, without being overwrought in the acquisition of it. Their ceremonies and customs, since they got a resident pastor, approximate to those of the mainland. Baptisms and marriages are conducted in the ordinary and regular way. On the occasion of a burial, all work is suspended on the island, and every one mourns. Laws can scarcely be said to exist, which is no bad proof of the peaceable disposition of the little community. As might be expected, they are very superstitious. For example, they uphold that the arrival of any stranger on the island immediately sends an epidemic *cough* through the population, called emphatically the "boat-cough." There is every prospect now, however, of these absurdities being ere long eradicated, as well as of great improvements being effected in many other respects among the islanders of St Kilda. Mr Mackenzie, their excellent pastor, whose presence they owe to the Scottish Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, ministers both to their religious and educational wants, for the last of which objects he has recently got a school-house erected. A chapel had been built before, chiefly through the exertions of the same Society, and has been a great blessing to the people, who seem to be a religiously disposed race. Mr Mackenzie also made a visit lately to Glasgow, and the result was, that Dr Macleod of Glasgow, Dr Dickson of Edinburgh, and other benevolent persons, visited St Kilda in July 1838, bearing with them the fruits of

various contributions for the benefit of the islanders. Forty-seven bedsteads, twenty-four chairs, twenty-one dressers, twenty-one glass windows, delf-ware, &c. &c. were divided among this little community, and will not only increase their comforts, but will, it may fairly be anticipated, save *infantine life*. What with these charitable contributions, and the exertions of Mr Mackenzie, a new era seems to be dawning on St Kilda, and the promise, we sincerely trust, will be ere long fulfilled.

NICOL MUSCHET'S CAIRN, AN EDINBURGH FIRESIDE STORY.

EVERY one will remember the introduction of the name of Nicol Muschet into the story of the Heart of Mid-Lothian, in connection with a cairn, or rude pile of stones, situated near the foot of the Duke's Walk, within the King's Park, and at no great distance from the palace of Holyrood House. Madge Wildfire, one of the characters of that beautiful tale, declares herself to have often held moonlight communion on that spot with the shades of Nicol Muschet and his wife, who, though not buried there, had their earthly fortunes lamentably interwoven with the scene. To record the whole details of the career of these persons, which formed a fireside story in the days of our fathers and grandfathers, would be almost an outrage on good feeling, but the outline of the tragedy may be presented to our readers.

Nicol Muschet was the son of Mr Muschet of Boghall, a small landed proprietor, and was born at the end of the seventeenth century. The father of Nicol died when the latter was in his boyhood, and left him under the charge of his mother, commonly styled Lady Boghall, a woman of piety and virtue. She gave her son a liberal collegiate education, and placed him under the care of Thomas Napier, surgeon in Alloa, with the view of his being brought up to that profession. But after a time, Nicol Muschet returned to his mother's house, having found that the Alloa surgeon had little or no business. In the year 1718, hearing of a dissection in Edinburgh, a rare thing, seemingly, in that day, Nicol went thither, and took up his residence in the capital from that time. He appears to have engaged himself to attend on a shop, but to have paid little attention to it, having fallen into the company of loose-living young men. Whether of his own right, or through his mother's consent and bounty, he was liberally supplied with money, and this seems to have been one of the chief causes of the young man's unhappy fate.

"One day," Nicol Muschet relates in his confession, "in the month of August 1719, accidentally walking to the Castle Hill, I saw a maid [servant] at the door of Adam Hall, whom I never knew before, nor any pertaining him. This maid shortly before had kept a cellar near to the shop which I was in, and she, being acquainted with me, asked if I would give her a chopin of ale? Which I granted; and when she and I had discoursed some time, Adam Hall's daughter came to us; and the maid said, she, being through [busy], behaved to leave me, but that this young lady would willingly entertain me." This was Nicol Muschet's first introduction to the daughter of Adam Hall, vintner on the Castle Hill. Being at the time in want of lodgings, Muschet was directed by the young woman Hall to the house of a friend of hers in the Anchor Close. Here he accordingly took up his abode, and here Margaret Hall often visited him, under the plea of calling on the landlady. Nicol Muschet declares that he never loved the girl, that he was ashamed of her visits, and that he had heard unfavourable stories of her. But he did not change his lodgings, or go out of the way of her pursuit, for it was plain that Muschet's fortune had led the Halls and their friends to look upon him as a most desirable match. Out of simplicity, as he says, and urged by Archibald Ure, goldsmith, an acquaintance of both himself and the Halls, Nicol Muschet was finally married to the young woman Hall on the 5th of September, after a three weeks' acquaintance between the parties.

The nuptials were scarcely solemnised, when the husband repented of the contract, but he staid, nevertheless, till some time in November, in the house of his wife's father. Nicol Muschet then went to the country, and there procured money and letters of recommendation, with the view of going abroad to perfect himself as a surgeon. After returning to town, he met one James Campbell, formerly farmer in Burnbank, who suggested to Muschet the possibility of getting rid of his wife by divorce. This was the first scheme which Nicol Muschet entertained against his wife, and he was to give Campbell L.50 sterling when that person could bring against Mrs Muschet evidence of infidelity sufficient to authorise a separation. By introducing hired wretches to her company, and drugging her liquor with laudanum, Campbell and his employer endeavoured, but in vain, to accomplish their object. Then, moving onwards in villany, they thought of cutting her off by poison, and with the assistance of James Muschet, periwig-maker, and his wife Grizzel, they contrived to give her corrosive sublimate in some sugar, which they mixed with brandy and hot water. This only caused severe vomiting and great suffering, which so little moved the heart of Nicol Muschet, that

* The ruins of the hut in which she lived are still to be seen, and prove it to have been a dwelling exactly like those of the other inhabitants. Lady Grange, most readers will remember, was a daughter of Chiefly of Dalry, who shot Lord President Lockhart, and the wife of Erskine of Grange, who kept her in mysterious exile on this island.

he gave her another dose of the same poison by means of a nutmeg-grater, into which he had introduced it. A third and a fourth time they repeated the dose, but her constitution carried her through all, though at the expense of great torment.

Being continually supplied with money by Nicol Muschet, Campbell and James Muschet suggested plan after plan for dispatching the unfortunate woman. It appeared, indeed, to have become the subject of daily and hourly deliberation among these callous villains. When poisoning failed, it was proposed to carry the poor wife "to Leith, and to drink there until very late, and on their way home to drown her in a pond." This plan not seeming practicable, James Muschet said "that he would, on pretence of kindness, take her to the west country with him on horseback, and have her pad so slackly tied, that he might easily throw her off in Kirkliston water, by his checking the horse, which he was to do after much rain, so that the water might be big enough to carry her off." This scheme was also too difficult and too much dependent on chance to be long thought of, and it was finally resolved to "knock her on the head." The instrument selected for this purpose was a heavy hammer, and James Muschet was to use this for a reward of twenty guineas. The wife of James Muschet, as eager in the pursuit of the plot as her husband, agreed to keep Nicol's wife in her own room in St Mary's Wynd to a late hour, that James Muschet might have an opportunity of committing the murderous deed at the head of Dickson's Close, which the victim had to pass through on her way to her own home. "James Muschet and his wife were very careful for a while in observing all the foresaid proposals to get the design accomplished, always making it their business to invite her (the victim) to their room—and that never sooner than eight o'clock at night, lest she, coming too soon, might weary—and to keep her as late as possible; but always, when he followed her to give her the stroke in the dark close, somebody going up or down prevented him."

This barbarous design, so perseveringly and remorselessly followed up, was at length accomplished, and that, in a measure, in an accidental way; in a way, at least, different from any that had been projected. On the morning of October the 17th, 1720, Nicol Muschet had occasion for a knife for some trifling purpose, and, having lost his own, borrowed his landlady's, who desired him to keep it till he found his own. He declares that he had no thought at the time of applying the weapon to the object which it afterwards effected. On that same evening, after he and James Muschet had "diverted themselves with some company in the Canongate" till about seven o'clock, they came away to attempt once more the scheme of murder with the hammer. Leaving his accomplice watching for the chance, Nicol Muschet went into a house with his unfortunate wife, whose death was to be accomplished on her way home. But when Nicol and she came out of the house in question, "being now hardened and also desperate," he be-thought himself that it was but a "light thing who was the executioner," and he resolved upon killing her himself. "I desired her (says he) to go down the Canongate with me; and when she asked on what account, I bade her ask no questions, but go along with me; and when we went the length of the Abbey, she asked, whither I was going? I said she was not concerned to know, but only she behaved to go with me. And when we were going through St Anne's Yards, she wept (Oh! how does my heart bleed to think on it!) and prayed, that heaven might forgive me, if I was taking her to any mischief; and she desired to return; then I said if she would return I was not to stop her, but I was going to Duddingston, and if she would not go with me, she needed never expect to exchange one word with me after." By these arguments, Nicol Muschet prevailed upon the wretched woman to go as far as he thought convenient for the deed, when he pulled out his knife, and killed her. Her throat was the spot that received the mortal wound; and it adds to the horror of the crime, that the unhappy woman strove to avert her fate more by humble entreaties than by resistance, since the murderer admits that, if she had chosen to struggle, he is confident he had not "got her overcome." Her piteous and fruitless cry was, "My love! my love! do not murder me!"

Having returned to the city, leaving the dead body where the crime was committed, Nicol Muschet immediately informed James Muschet and his wife of what had happened. These persons at once showed Nicol what use they would make of the mastery they had acquired over him, by demanding money from him, which he was compelled to grant. He then went to Leith, and came to Edinburgh again on the following night, when he saw James Muschet's wife, who declared that she and her husband intended to "perjure themselves for him." How little sincerity there was in this declaration, appeared on the following day, when the parties were examined, and revealed the whole affair. "They turned so inveterate against me, that, upon the Thursday's night, the said Grizzel Muschet (notwithstanding of her solemn protestations to the contrary, which I thought made me always secure from any danger) treacherously inquired for my quarters in Leith, on pretence of coming to me, and informing me how matters were going; which when she got notice of, she presently informed the magistrates of Edinburgh, and went along with a party of

the city guards that same night; but they did not find me." They did find him, however, on the ensuing day, and their guide in the discovery was still Grizzel Muschet. Thus was Nicol Muschet fitly brought into the hands of justice by the agency of those who had abetted and profited by his crimes.

When first examined, Nicol Muschet denied the charge brought against him, but he soon retracted his words, and confessed the whole. He was condemned to death, and was executed accordingly in the beginning of January 1721. His accomplices in plotting against the life of his ill-fated wife were also subjected to examination, but the evidence against them was not strong enough to make them partakers of his doom.

A cairn was placed near, but not close upon, the spot where the crime was committed. It was afterwards removed during the formation of a regular footpath through the park; but has been latterly restored. The precise spot where the murder took place, is, by Nicol Muschet's own account, close by the east end of the walk.

This tale of crime was never told at our ancestral firesides without a moral being drawn from it, which moral, though void of novelty, is not unworthy of repetition. Nicol Muschet presents a notable specimen of the consequences of a gradual familiarisation with wickedness. A divorce was all he sought at first. By degrees, he listened to proposals for his wife's death, to be put in force by others. Ultimately, he himself became the murderer, and a most savage and cruel one. Had he struggled earnestly against yielding to the first evil passion, he would not have died on the scaffold.

A FEW WEEKS ON THE CONTINENT.

DELFT—HAGUE.

It was on a beautiful morning in August that we bade a temporary adieu to Rotterdam, and proceeded on our excursion through Holland. Our conveyance was the public diligence, by which we proposed to go as far as Delft, and had reason to be pleased with the arrangement. The Dutch diligences are well-fitted-up and roomy vehicles, equal to the best in France, and are generally drawn by three powerful horses yoked abreast. Travellers in Holland can never be at any loss in making their way by these commodious conveyances, for, by a law of the country, the proprietors of public vehicles are obliged to provide for all passengers who may make their appearance before the hour of departure. They have thus frequently to yoke additional coaches, just before starting, greatly to the comfort of the traveller, though perhaps to their own loss. Although the distance from Rotterdam to Delft is nine English miles, the fare of each person by the diligence is no more than a guilder, or one shilling and eightpence.

The road proceeds in a north-westerly direction alongside of a canal, and across a flat region of rich grassy meadows or polders, devoted to the purpose of grazing, and here and there dotted with farm-houses and cottages, also a few tasteful villas, in the Dutch style. In passing one of those mansions of an old date, my attention was drawn to two figures, each representing a ham, painted on the stone gateway in front of the edifice. There is a legendary story, as I learned, connected with these odd-looking figures. During the time of the Spaniards, when this part of the country was reduced to famine, the proprietor of the mansion and adjoining grounds sold the whole for a couple of hams, in order to save the lives of his perishing family. The fortunate acquirer of the property has commemorated the transaction, little as it may be deemed to his own credit, in the manner which I have mentioned.

Delft is an old-fashioned brick town, as Dutch as possible in its appearance, with old gateways, and lines of trees and havens in the middle of the streets. You at once see that the place is not what it has once been—no shipping, no trade, and no bustle in its almost empty thoroughfares. Its lines of leafy trees, once prized for their delightful shade, now bend over green-mantled pools undisturbed by traffic, and only apparently kept up for the fashion of the thing, or for the accommodation of a passing treckschuit. In former times, it was the great seat of the manufacture of the kind of earthenware to which it gave its own name of Delft; but England has long since taken the trade from it, and we saw the wares of Staffordshire, as we supposed them to be, for sale in its shops. The population of the town is now about fifteen thousand.

In proceeding along one of the chief streets, entering from Rotterdam, the traveller passes on the left a striking memorial of former Dutch commercial greatness. This is the large building once occupied by the Dutch East India Company, with the date 1692 on the front. Facing the street, it extends along one of the havens for a considerable length, but all its windows and doors are shut, and it is now used, I believe, as an arsenal or depot of military stores. Delft con-

tains only three places deemed interesting to strangers, and these we dispatched in the space of little more than two hours. The first we proceeded to, was the spot on which took place the assassination of William I., Prince of Orange, situated pretty nearly on a line from the old India House.

William I., Prince of Orange, as will be recollected from the historical sketch in last article, was mainly instrumental in expelling the Spaniards from the country, and effecting the union of the seven provinces of Holland. For this he incurred the hatred of a malignant partisan of the Spanish cause, Balthazar Geraarts, and by this wretch was foully shot in his palace at Delft, when about to ascend a staircase after dinner. In the present day, the palace, or *prinsenhof*, serves the purpose of a barracks for soldiers, and consists of a plain brick building within a courtyard. The spot where the murder took place is within a lobby at the foot of a flight of steps, and the marks of the shot (of course improved by art) are pointed out in the wall. An inscription in Dutch on a stone above, is translated as follows:—"Below this stone are the marks of the balls by which Prince William of Orange was shot on the 10th of July 1584." Adjourning from this spot of historical interest, we proceeded to the New Church of Delft, situated at the east end of the market-place, in which the tomb of William is shown as one of the most magnificent objects of art in Holland. This fine old Gothic church possesses a conspicuous lofty tower, in which is hung one of the best peals of bells in Europe. The interior of the edifice has been lately completely modernised in its furniture, and has nothing to attract curiosity but two objects in the open choir, the tombs of the Prince of Orange and of Grotius.

The tomb of the prince is a lofty structure, composed entirely of marble, rising prominently from the floor of the choir. It consists of a highly ornamented canopy supported by a number of black and white marble pillars. In the centre, on a sarcophagus, lies the figure of the prince in his robes, beautifully sculptured in white marble, and at his feet lies the figure of his faithful dog, which on one occasion saved his master's life in a midnight attack. According to an inscription, the animal was so much affected with the death of the prince, that it pined and died. There are several good figures in bronze round the tomb; that which is most admired is a figure of Fame blowing a trumpet, and resting lightly on one toe, as if about to take its flight. The monument of Grotius is adjacent, on the north wall of the choir, and consists of a marble obelisk, with a cenotaph, on which is the simple inscription *HUGONI GROTIJO SACRUM*.

The Oude Kerk, or old church of Delft, is a structure remarkable for its extreme antiquity and huge size. It is situated in a back street, and on approaching it, the stranger is amazed at the enormous mass of brick, grey with age, which meets his eye. It is some seven or eight hundred years old, and seems indebted for its protracted existence to the clusters of parasitical houses and shops built within the recesses of its buttressed walls. The interior is not less ancient in aspect, though much of the internal furniture for public worship has been lately improved. On entering the edifice by a side-door, the wide open choir, dimly lighted and paved with old well-worn monumental stones, is before you. Silence reigns in the vast and sombre expanse, and in reverential awe we approach the tomb of Tromp.

MARTIN HARPERTZDOON TROMP was the Nelson of Holland, and deserves a word in passing. Born at Briel in 1579, he in early life entered the naval service of the states-general, and in 1639 was promoted to the rank of admiral. From this period, he was almost constantly engaged in warring with the fleets of Spain or England. Accompanied with De Ruyter, he stood forward as the antagonist of Blake, whom he met and vanquished in the Downs in November 1652. On this occasion he pursued the English fleet into the Thames, and burnt a vessel at Spithead. Flushed with victory, and like a true sailor, he caused a broom to be fastened to his mast-head, as a sign that he could sweep the Channel of the English. In the following year, his career of victory was brought summarily to a close. At the head of a fleet of a hundred and twenty vessels, and aided with the presence of De Witt and De Ruyter, he encountered the English off the Dutch coast, and in the midst of the battle he fell pierced with a musket-ball. "Courage, my boys!" exclaimed the sinking hero, faintly waving his sword; "my course is ended with glory." The victory was gained by the English only after very great loss. It is recorded of Tromp that he was conqueror in thirty-three naval engagements. Till the present day, the Dutch speak of him with exultation, and pictures of his famed exploits in the Thames are frequently to be seen in their houses. The monument over his tomb in the church at Delft, is placed on the end wall of the choir. It is a large structure, in white, red, and black marble, with a figure of the veteran warrior reclining on a bier in the centre of the piece. Beneath, is a representation in marble of the great event of his life—the victory over Blake in the Downs. At a short distance, in the north transept, is erected a similar monument in marble, to Admiral Hein, the early friend and associate of Tromp, and who was killed by a shot while Tromp was fighting at his side. Little as I am disposed to pay reverence to the character of mere fighting heroes, I could not but feel respect for the tombs of these intrepid admirals, whose names are associated with the brightest period of the history of a free people.

Having sufficiently examined these objects of interest in Delft, and observed, that, with all its dullness, the town is both neat and cleanly in a very high degree, we passed on our journey in the direction of the Hague, which lies at the distance of about four or five miles. On this occasion we chose the public treckschuit or canal-boat for a means of conveyance. Vessels of this description are so very common in Holland, that one may travel by them in almost any direction, and at an exceedingly small cost. They are fitted up with a neat cabin, and also a steerage, like canal-boats in England, and are drawn by one or two horses; the horses, however, are in all cases made to draw by a rope passing to them from the top of a mast, instead of from the bows of the vessel. This arrangement prevents the friction of the rope on the banks, or in the water, and the mast is lowered at every bridge under which the boat passes in its course.

The sail on the canal from Delft to the Hague forms an agreeable little trip. The country becomes more woody and thickly dotted with windmills, farm-cottages, and ornamental villas, and we pass on our left the ancient town of Ryswick, where, in 1697, the famous treaty of peace between England, France, Holland, Germany, and Spain, was effected. At an interval of every few minutes we pass a villa of some wealthy retired Dutchman, or individual connected with the court at the Hague. These edifices are usually of brick, plastered and painted, to look as trim and tidy as if just taken out of a box; and, with their close-shaven bit of lawn in front, their narrow wet ditch separating the domain from the public thoroughfare, their little bridge across the said ditch surmounted with a dashing wooden gateway, their clusters of dahlias growing à l'Anglais in round patches among the shrubbery, and, lastly, their fresh-painted summer-house, commanding a view of all that passes on the canal and road, impart an idea of the retired leisure and comfort which attend a life spent in successful industry. Every house or establishment of this nature in Holland, is styled a *Lust* (or Pleasure), and is known by a particular motto or sentiment inscribed on the gateway. We frequently amused ourselves by translating these mottoes, and I find the following among others entered in my note-book—*BUITEN GEDACHTEN*, Beyond Expectation; *ONS GENOEGEN*, Our Contentment; *LUST EN RUST*, Pleasure in Rest or Ease; *NIET ZOO GUAALYK*, Not so Bad; *MYN GENEGENTHIED IS VOLDOEN*, My Desire is Satisfied.

A pleasant run of an hour in the treckschuit brought us alongside the quay of one of the havens of the Hague, and we were forthwith at liberty to perambulate the town in search of those objects which render it interesting to travellers. Before saying any thing of these, it may be of use to mention, that the name of *Hague* is an appellation conferred only by the English, and that the Dutch uniformly give it the title of *S'Gravenhage*, or, as they roughly pronounce it, *Sgravenhauch*, the literal signification of which is, the Count's Haugh or Meadow. The name, it seems, is traced to the circumstance of the place having formed a residence for the Counts of Holland in the thirteenth century, since which time the town has gradually increased to its present size, with a population of about sixty thousand souls. The Hague possesses the usual qualities of a Dutch town—brick houses and brick pavements, havens or canals in several of the streets, and rows of leafy trees shading the houses from the sun. In general appearance, however, it is much superior to that of the trading and commercial cities. It is the seat of the court and government, and has therefore many of the peculiarities of a capital. To our feeling, it had a lightness and airiness which other places wanted. Excepting in those streets appropriated to shops and the residence of the humbler orders, the houses are lofty and aristocratic in their aspect, and the beauty and magnificence of the avenues of trees which environ the town on its northern extremity, cannot be surpassed. The Hague, also, possesses several fine open squares or places, one of which is ornamented with a lake in the centre, in which rises a small island loaded with foliage. Close by this pretty sheet of water are situated the chief palatial structures which attract the attention of strangers.

One of these, an elegant building of the seventeenth century, and originally the palace of Prince Maurice, is now occupied as a National or Royal Museum for objects of antiquity and curiosity in the lower floor, and paintings above. The picture gallery, to which we first paid a visit, is one of the largest and most valuable in the north of Europe, and exceeded any thing of the kind we had previously seen. Not the least of its recommendations is that of being open to the free inspection of the public, and we therefore found in it persons of all ranks of society, and stranger artists belonging to different nations copying the principal pieces. It would be very hopeless to attempt to convey, within the compass of these limited papers, any correct idea of this invaluable collection of works of art. An ample staircase leads to a group of lofty apartments, all which are hung with pictures of the chief masters, and others selected for their excellence. The principal pictures are those of Rembrandt, Rubens, Vandyk, Paul Potter, Wouvermanns, Teniers, and Berghem, with a few by Vernet and Murillo. The grand object of attraction is Paul Potter's Bull, a picture which occupies pretty nearly the whole end of one of the rooms. The representation is that of a young bull with brown and white spots, a cow reclining on the green-sward before it, two or three sheep, and

an aged cowherd leaning over a fence—all as large as life; the background being a distant landscape. A person with no critical skill whatever, at once recognises the fidelity of the piece. The chief animal in the group appears to stand out in bold relief, with a briskness in its air which is perfectly startling; such, also, is the minuteness of the touching in order to make every hair on the hide and forehead of the creature tell, that the picture will endure the closest inspection. This highly prized work of art was carried off to Paris by order of Napoleon, and hung in the Louvre, but was afterwards restored to the Dutch. It is now valued at L.5000.

The Royal Museum of Curiosities in the lower apartments is of great extent and value. Two or three of the principal rooms are entirely occupied with articles from China and Japan, countries from which the Dutch have possessed peculiar means of procuring objects of virtù. Tall glass cases along the walls are filled with magnificent robes of eastern fabric, and in the centre of the floor stand numerous cases displaying prodigies of Chinese skill, in ivory-carving, and other articles of taste and luxury. Other cases are occupied with specimens of war implements and armour from Japan, and from the roof hang a variety of highly embellished Chinese lanterns, and other curious objects. In the centre of one of the apartments is a glass case measuring some ten feet in height and twenty feet in length, containing a model of the isle and fortified town of Desima, a Dutch factory in Japan. The scale is so large that the houses are about six inches in height, and a complete view is afforded of the appearance of the streets, also the inhabitants in their rich and picturesque costumes. From this apartment we are led into a room, the last in the series, devoted chiefly to objects of antiquity connected with Dutch history and distinguished public characters. Among a thousand things which would delight the heart of an antiquary, are the armour, sword, chain, and baton of De Ruyter; muskets of a huge size and antique make used on board the old Dutch fleets; the shirt which was worn by William III. of England during the last three days of his life; a gold watch with movements in ivory, and figures in mother of pearl; the upper leather garment of William I., Prince of Orange, as worn by him at the time of his assassination, with the shattered balls and pistol with which Geraerts effected the murder; also a scroll of the sentence which condemned the assassin. The most interesting object in our estimation was a beautiful model of a Dutch merchant's house, as it appeared at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century. This wonder of art is inclosed in a large square case composed of plate glass framed in tortoise-shell inlaid with silver; it was constructed by Mr Brand, an ingenious artist of Amsterdam, in obedience to an order of Peter the Great of Russia, who was desirous of placing before the eyes of his semi-barbarous subjects an exact representation of the internal structure and style of furnishing of one of those elegant mansions which he had seen in Holland, while there learning the craft of a ship-carpenter. As a means of civilising the Russian nobility, the idea was well conceived; and it is only to be regretted that Peter's stinginess or lack of funds should have prevented the completion of the design. The model was done in such a style of elegance, and so faithful in its details, that it required twenty-five years to execute, and was valued at the moderate sum of 30,000 francs, or nearly L.1500. It was refused to be taken at so apparently extravagant a price; and having fallen into the hands of a native purchaser, it now finds a place in the Royal Museum as a curiosity. The model measures from three to four feet in height and breadth, and consists of a house of three stories, which are exposed to view by the removal of the front wall. Each floor possesses its appropriate rooms, which are furnished in miniature, in strict agreement with what existed at the time in the houses of opulent Dutchmen. From the minute porcelain ornaments in the drawing-room to the smoothing-irons in the laundry, nothing is omitted in this exquisitely constructed model.

From the museum we proceeded to the palace of the king of Holland, situated in a street diverging to the north, and no way secluded from the public thoroughfare. The building, which is in the Grecian style, consists of a centre and two wings, forming a façade on three sides of a square. As the royal family was at the time out of town, we had an opportunity of seeing the interior, which displays a suite of princely apartments on the first floor, chiefly adapted as state reception-rooms for the king and queen. The king here gives audiences on one day of every week, and to these the poorest persons are admitted, provided they have previously inscribed their names in the books of the chamberlain. The only valuable object of virtù shown to strangers is a magnificent vase of green jasper, five feet in height, which was presented by the king of Prussia to his majesty, and is intended as a baptismal font. The palace of the Prince of Orange, a large but plain edifice, situated in an angle of one of the open Places, and to which we next traced our steps, is usually considered more worthy of the visits of strangers than the house of the king. It contains a number of pictures of great excellence, chiefly modern Dutch painters, among whom may be mentioned Wappers, Knip, and Gustof. Turning from these, we were led into the great salle, a splendid apartment profusely decorated with marble, and enriched by a large and unique collection of sketches

of the great masters, hung in frames on the walls. These valuable relics consist of the original chalk drawings on paper of Rubens, Vandyk, Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, Correggio, and Michael Angelo—in fact, the first designs of the many works of art of these inimitable painters. The sight of these interesting pieces was a treat we shall not easily forget; and we regretted, for the sake of British art, that they had been lost to England. It will be recollected that they were at one time the property of Sir Thomas Lawrence, who directed that, at his death, they should be first offered for sale to the British nation for a stated sum. This was accordingly done, but the offer not being accepted, they were afterwards purchased by the present Prince of Orange, whose valet has now the honour of showing them to Englishmen, and explaining their merits.

Hague possesses a number of private collections of pictures, which, however, we had no desire to examine, and we spent a few hours in visiting several of the more remarkable of the public edifices, including the Binnenhof, or place of meeting of the legislature, and an ancient prison in which Barneveldt was confined previous to his being brought out for execution in the open Place in front. There is little to interest in the appearance of even the best buildings, and the stranger finds his chief pleasure in strolling through the Voorhout towards the beautiful park and forest scenery at the northern environs. The Voorhout (or Fore wood) is an extensive parallelogram, lined on the sides with elegant mansions, many of them the houses of ambassadors, and laid out along the centre with avenues of richly clothed trees. Here all classes may enjoy themselves either in promenading or in sitting on benches beneath the trees; and if they feel disposed, they may prolong their walks clear out of the Voorhout, across the Cingel by a bridge, and into those finely timbered parks which I have already alluded to.

The *Bosch*, as this woody domain is entitled, consists principally of a wide-spreading forest of timber, of the oak, elm, and beech species, most of the trees being very tall, and of considerable age and bulk. Much taste has been lavished on the disposal of the grounds, in order to render them every way suitable as a place for walking and solitary meditation. The king, as I understand, has been at considerable expense in improving them, by embellishing them with sheets of water and private footpaths; and at different spots, casinos, or houses for the sale of refreshments, have been permitted to be erected. The *Huis in den Bosch*, or House in the Wood, where the royal family now chiefly reside, is situated in the midst of this scene of rural retirement, and may be seen at a short distance from the main thoroughfare.

We passed several hours in the evening in wandering through the mazy paths and solitudes of this enchanting scene, and did not return to our hotel till the long slanting shadows of the trees thrown across the open glades, and the fading beams of the sun, warned us that the hours of rest were approaching.

BIOGRAPHIC SKETCHES.

ROBERT BLOOMFIELD.

ROBERT BLOOMFIELD, the author of the *Farmer's Boy*, was born at the village of Honington, near Bury, in the county of Suffolk, on the 3d day of December 1766. His parentage was extremely humble, his father being a tailor in the village mentioned. Losing this parent when less than one year old, Robert, the youngest of six children, was left to the charge of his widowed mother, who taught a school, and was thus enabled to instruct as well as maintain her offspring. With the exception of a few months spent in improving his handwriting under the care of a teacher at Ixworth, young Bloomfield appears to have received no other education than that which his mother could supply; and her union with a second husband, which entailed again on her the cares of an infant family, must have brought these parental instructions in a great measure to an end, when the boy was only seven years of age.

At the age of eleven, Robert Bloomfield became a farmer's boy, the toils and pleasures of which occupation afterwards afforded a theme for his muse. His master, who was the husband of Mrs Bloomfield's sister, and who was a man

"By deeds of hospitality endared,

Served from affection, for his worth revered,"

was generous enough, contrary to custom, to take the youth into his own family, and supply him with every necessary excepting clothes. The burden, however, of supplying even this single article, was too heavy for the mother's circumstances, and, after a time, she wrote for assistance to her two elder sons, George and Nathaniel Bloomfield, who had been bred shoemakers, and now followed that employment in London. The mother's letter also mentioned that Robert was so small of his age as to render it unlikely that he would ever be able to fill the situation of a rustic labourer with comfort to himself. In reply, George Bloomfield offered to take the boy, and teach him to make shoes, while Nathaniel promised to clothe him. The mother, upon this offer, immediately took Robert to London,

and left him with his brothers. In detailing this occurrence, George Bloomfield himself says, "She charged me, as I valued a mother's blessing, to watch over him, to set good examples for him, and never to forget that he had lost his father." George thus describes the appearance of his youthful brother at that period. "When I met him and his mother at the inn, he strutted before us, dressed just as he came from keeping sheep, hogs, &c.—his shoes filled full of stumps in the heels. Looking about him, he slipped and fell; his nails were unused to a flat pavement. I remember viewing him as he scampered up; how small he was. Little thought I, that that little fatherless boy would be one day known and esteemed by the most learned, the most respected, the wisest, and the best men of the kingdom." Robert himself by no means thought his appearance so clownish as here described, for he remembered afterwards, that, before leaving the country, he had "slyly washed his hat in the *horse pond*, to give it a gloss fit to appear in the meridian of London."

The two elder brothers wrought as journeymen in a garret-room, with three other persons of the same trade, all being lodgers at a shilling a-week. Robert became errand-boy to the band, and at other times learnt the shoemaking trade. The party were also in the habit of receiving a newspaper, at least a perusal of one, and Robert became reader-general. At first he met with many words that he was unacquainted with; but his brother George bought him an old dictionary for fourpence, and by the help of this, he in a little time could read and comprehend the long and beautiful speeches of Burke, Fox, and other great orators of the day. As to books, a few only of the most common kind, such as a History of England, the British Traveller, and a geographical work, fell into the boy's way, and were perused by him at this time. But one publication came into his hands, which had seemingly a great, and indeed an almost undivided efficacy in nourishing and forming his literary taste. This was the London Magazine. "In that work (says George Bloomfield, in his notices of his brother's early days) about two sheets were set apart for a review—Robert seemed always eager to read this review. Here he could see what the literary men were doing, and learn how to judge of the merits of the works that came out. And I observed that he always looked at the Poet's Corner. And one day he repeated a song which he had composed to an old tune. I was much surprised that he should make so smooth verses; so I persuaded him to try whether the editor of our paper would give them a place." The paper alluded to was named *Say's Gazetteer*, and the following is the first verse of the song in question, which was headed "A Village Girl!"

Hail, May! lovely May! how replenish'd my pails!

The young dawn o'erspreads the broad east, streak'd with gold!

My glad heart beats time to the laugh of the vales,

And Colin's voice rings through the wood from the fold. With reference to Robert's further reading at this period, his brother relates, that, on changing their lodgings, they came in contact with a Scotsman, who lent Robert some novels, *Paradise Lost*, and the *Seasons*, with which latter poem he expressed uncommon delight.

Owing to some contentions in the trade relative to indentured and unindentured workmen, Robert, when about nineteen, being always averse from strife, left London, and spent two months with his old master, the farmer. "Here free from the smoke, the noise, the contention of the city, he imbibed that love of rural scenery, which fitted him, in a great degree, to be the writer of the Farmer's Boy." When he returned to London, he found it necessary to indenture himself in a regular way to a master shoemaker. When he was turned of twenty, he was separated from George, who left London, and went to live in the country. Robert continued to pursue his trade in the city, and at his leisure-hours studied music, and became a good violin-player. In December 1790, when exactly twenty-four years old, he (to use his own words) "sold his fiddle and got a wife," his chosen partner being Mary-Anne Church, a young woman from Woolwich. At first the pair were so poor of household goods as to be obliged to live in a furnished lodging. "At length (says his brother George), by hard working, he acquired a bed of his own, and hired a room up one pair of stairs at 14, Bell Alley, Coleman Street. The landlord kindly gave him leave to sit and work in a light garret, two pair of stairs higher, where six or seven other shoemakers also wrought." In this place, surrounded by so many companions, all engaged in a trade not the most peaceable, Robert Bloomfield began the composition of the work on which his reputation as a poet must ever rest—his *Farmer's Boy*.

Bloomfield's own recollections, as has been already stated, formed the chief source whence the materials of this poem were derived, but he also points to some letters of his brother George from the country, as having afforded him the essence of various passages. One remarkable point connected with the composition of the *Farmer's Boy*, is the length of time which he was obliged to retain parts of it on his memory before having an opportunity of putting them on paper. At one period he held on his memory half the division of the piece called *Autumn*, and the whole of that on *Winter*, which amount together to upwards of *five hundred and sixty lines*. The whole poem was finished about the beginning of the year 1798, when the idea of

printing his production entered his mind, and, after much hesitation, and many modest misgivings, he resolved to try a publisher. The first person to whom he applied was Mr Bent, publisher of the *Universal Magazine*, a work he had often read. The letter wherewith he accompanied the *Farmer's Boy*, when he sent the manuscript to Mr Bent, is equally manly and modest. "Sir, a total stranger, very low, and very obscure, ventures to address you. In my sedentary employment as a journeyman shoemaker, I have amused and exercised my mind, I hope innocently, in putting the little events of my boyage into metre, intending it as a present to an aged mother, now living on the spot; to whom the Church, the Mad Girl, the Farm-house, and all the local circumstances of the piece, are intimately known." The letter then proceeds to say, that all which the author presumes to ask, is a "word of opinion inserted in the blank leaves." The manuscript was kept ten days, and then came back with the cold sentence, "It cannot be expected that any stranger should give his opinion of such a literary performance to the author." This was, of course, one way of expressing utter contempt for the production. Not quite disheartened, Bloomfield tried Mr Sane, an extensive novel-publisher of the day. This gentleman sent it back immediately, with the announcement that "poetry was quite out of his line." Another publisher advised the author to send the piece to the *Monthly Magazine*: but as he would have had to pay for his own rhymes had they been printed thus, before he could send them to his mother, Bloomfield preferred to keep them in manuscript, and send them in that condition to his parent.

The *Farmer's Boy* accordingly came down to Bury St Edmunds to George Bloomfield, for the purpose of being shown to the writer's mother. After this had been done, George, who was well capable of appreciating the poem, sent it to Capel Loft, Esq., a litterateur of some note in those days, and a generous friend to struggling authors. Mr Loft was immediately struck with such an emanation from a quarter so unpromising and obscure. He saw in the piece great fidelity of painting and felicity of diction, and immediately entered into correspondence with the author, whom he delighted by the declaration, that the *Farmer's Boy* was "more truly a rural poem than any in the language, with the exception of the works of Ramsay and Burns." At the same time Mr Loft used his influence with a London publisher to have the poem sent through the press. These things were done more slowly than now-a-days, and fifteen months elapsed before the work was given to the public, during which interval the author quietly pursued his ordinary occupation. "At length, in March 1800 (says he), my brother Nathaniel called to say that he had seen, in a shop window, a book called the *Farmer's Boy*. I told him I supposed it must be mine, but I knew nothing of the motto; and I the more believed it to be mine, from having just received, through the hands of Mr Loft, a request to wait on the Duke of Grafton." The duke (a large proprietor in Bloomfield's native region) received him kindly, and asked him, "How he liked the printing and execution of the book?" Bloomfield said he had not seen it, and was then shown a beautiful large-paper copy. He confesses that the sight was almost too much for him.

The *Farmer's Boy* consists of a delineation of the labours of a farm through the four seasons of the year, each of which gives name to a division of the poem. The work is so well known, that it would be a work of supererogation to describe it in detail. Of its pleasing easy style, and its faithfulness in depicting homely rural scenes, a few lines will remind the reader. As the farmer's boy sits drowsily by the winter fire,

"He starts, and ever thoughtful of his team,
Along the glittering snow a feeble gleam
Shoots from his lantern, as he yawning goes
To add fresh comforts to their night's repose;
Diffusing fragrance as their food he moves,
And pats the jolly sides of those he loves.
Thus full replenished, perfect ease possesses,
From night to morn alternate food and rest.
No rightful cheer withheld, no sleep debarred,
Their each day's labour brings its sure reward.
Yet when from plough or lumb'ring cart set free,
They taste awhile the sweets of liberty;
E'en sober Dobbin lifts his clumsy heels
And kicks, disdainful of the dirty wheels;
But soon, his frolic ended, yields again
To trudge the road, and wear the clinking chain."

The author of the *Farmer's Boy* became the object of very general attention and applause, on the publication of his poem, which soon went through several editions. It yielded Robert Bloomfield considerable emolument, which was very much required, as the poor poet's health became more and more precarious as he advanced in life, rendering him unable to follow his occupation of a shoemaker with the activity necessary to the maintenance of his wife and the five children whom she bore to him. Perceiving this, the Duke of Grafton generously gave Bloomfield the office of under-sealer of the writs in the Court of King's Bench; but after holding the place for some months, Robert was obliged to resign it, being incapable, through bad health, of attending to the regular discharge of its duties. He returned to his old trade, and also employed himself in constructing *Eolian harps*. It required all the proceeds, both from these occupations and from the sale of his poetry, to maintain the family, to whom Bloomfield gave a good education, and whom

he always loved to see neat and comfortable. Besides, the author of the *Farmer's Boy* expended much of his means in assisting his brothers, and also bought his father's old cottage at Honington, which proved a source of great loss. Owing to these circumstances, and above all to his infirm health, Robert Bloomfield remained poor, and even fell into difficulties, notwithstanding the publication, at intervals, of various new pieces, which were received by the public with nearly as much favour as the first production of his muse. These new publications were entitled "Rural Tales," "Good Tidings," and "Wild Flowers," consisting of many separate poems, long and short. Ultimately, Bloomfield was forced to leave London, for a change of scene, having become nearly blind, and being afflicted with continual headaches. These bodily ailments were much aggravated by his want of success in the book-trade, which he had tried during the last years of his metropolitan life.

Shefford, in Bedfordshire, was the spot to which Bloomfield retired, and where he spent the remainder of his days. A poem, entitled the "Banks of the Wye," and a little collection styled "May-day with the Muses," were the chief efforts of his mind during his declining years, which were rendered most unhappy by his anxieties for his family, and his fears of leaving them in want and misery. After being brought almost to the verge of insanity by his mental and bodily sufferings, poor Bloomfield died on the 19th of August 1824, at the age of fifty-seven.

Some of Bloomfield's minor pieces are extremely sweet and simple, although exhibiting no great depth or strength of poetical talent. The following song is a fair example of these little lyrics. It is the address of a shepherd to his dog Rover:—

"Rover, awake! the gray cock crows;
Come, shake your coat and go with me
High in the east the green hill glows;
And glory crowns our shelt'ring tree.
The sheep expect us at the fold:
My faithful dog, let's haste away,
And in his earliest beams behold.
And hail, the source of cheerful day.
Half his broad orb o'erlooks the hill,
And, darting down the valley flies:
At every casement welcome still,
The golden summons of the skies.
Go, fetch my staff; and o'er the dews
Let echo waft thy gladsome voice:
Shall we a cheerful note refuse?
When rising morn proclaims, 'Rejoice!'
Now then we'll start; and thus I'll sling
Our store, a trivial load to bear;
Yet, ere night comes, should hunger sting,
I'll not encroach on Rover's share.
The fresh breeze bears its sweets along;
The lark but chides us while we stay:
Soon shall the vale repeat my song;
Go brush before—away, away."

POPULAR AMUSEMENT.

THE following short paper has been handed to us by a respectable member of the working class of Glasgow; and we with much pleasure give it a place in our columns, not only with the view of showing the excellent tone of mind that prevails among a large section of the class to which the writer belongs, but also the praiseworthy means which they have recently adopted for their recreation and moral improvement. The plan is precisely that which we have frequently advocated and recommended to the notice of temperance associations.

"One of the distinguishing features of the present age, is the spirit of benevolent enterprise by which various classes of individuals are actuated in promoting by every possible means the improvement of the people. Efforts of philanthropy, whether successful or not, furnish an object on which the mind can uniformly repose with pleasure, and realise some of those delights which 'virtue—tranquil virtue—only can bestow.' Invention has been placed upon the stretch to devise new and attractive schemes by which the condition of the humbler orders of society may be improved, and instruction communicated in the most agreeable and acceptable manner. Nor will any one deny, who glances for a moment at the destitution of England, as exhibited in the 'Report, just published, of the Committee of the House of Commons on the education of the poorer classes of England and Wales,' that such efforts are unneeded, or even commensurate with the extent of the work to be performed. The horrid and brutalising amusement of bull-baiting still exists, unfortunately, in the south, and in some parts is warmly patronised by the common people, who are not only ignorant of more refined amusement, but of the very rudiments or first principles of knowledge. That the labouring man requires some interval in the course of his toil to recruit his wasted strength and spirits, is a fact universally admitted. Relaxation, indeed, whether of an intellectual or physical nature, is essential to the continued healthy action of the human system. Without it, disease and melancholy never fail to make their

appearance, and prey upon their victim. The bow which is always bent, inevitably loses much of its native elasticity and power. The close confinement and long-continued toil to which so many are unavoidably subjected in our large towns and rural factories, by predisposing the body to disease, and creating a strong desire for stimulating liquors, have proved exceedingly prejudicial to health, and contributed to swell the dark catalogue of the victims of drunkenness and vice. It too frequently happens, indeed, that the care-worn and tired artisan, at the close of the week, is induced to visit the alehouse, and, seated with some kindred spirits, tempted to drain the intoxicating cup with the view of banishing 'dull care,' and tasting, as he thinks, some of life's glad moments. No one needs to be told how fascinating and fatal this sort of amusement is. It holds its votaries in the most degrading bondage, and opens the door to every abomination. The tap-rooms and other drinking haunts are, in most instances, little else than normal schools for gambling, and the acquisition of the arts of villany. The money which is spent in such places is the least objectionable feature in them. The habits acquired, and the time consumed over disgusting potations, mingled with still more disgusting conversation, entail upon thousands and tens of thousands untold wretchedness and misery. Happiness flies at once the bosom and the home of him who habitually frequents them. To check in some degree this great and growing evil, requires, on the part of every one alive to the claims of his country and his kind, combined and persevering effort. As a nation, it has grown with our growth, and strengthened with our strength; and the maturity to which it has unfortunately arrived, places the day of its final abolition, it is to be feared, still at a great distance.

Various plans have been devised, and partially carried into effect, with the view of abolishing the evil in question, and furnishing the people, during leisure hours, with entertaining and elevating amusement. Among these there is one, recently begun in Glasgow, under the superintendence of the Total Abstinence Society of that city, whose merits require only to be known to be generally appreciated and extensively adopted. Perceiving that a great many cases of drunkenness occurred on the Saturday evening, and that these arose in part from the absence of some attractive public resort, where amusement might be obtained at a cheap rate, the committee resolved to try what could be done to supply the deficiency. They immediately procured a piano-forte, engaged a number of glee and solo singers, and forthwith put the novel apparatus in motion in one of the large halls of the city, during the Saturday evening—taking care to provide, as frequently as possible, a lecture on some scientific topic, to be delivered in the interval of the two parts into which the entertainment is divided—price of admission to be twopenny. A weekly concert of great interest was thus established, to which all have access. Latterly, instrumental music has been added, and the pieces are more systematically arranged. The lecture occupies about forty-five minutes, and the whole 'Social Meeting' two hours and a half. Members of the same enterprising society have recently opened meetings of a similar character in Calton and Gorbals. Great success has attended the introduction of this new plan. Its popular nature was so decided, and the necessity existing in Glasgow for still more accommodation of this description so apparent, that the committee of the Mechanics' Institution determined to throw open their large hall every Saturday evening for a similar purpose. No difficulty was found in obtaining suitable performers. The musical melange is divided, as in the former instance, into two parts, and so arranged as to allow the instrumental and vocal pieces to be given alternately. A lecture has been delivered every evening, in the interval of the parts, generally of a superior character, and illustrated by the apparatus belonging to the institution. Complete success has also attended this attempt to render the power of music, in union with science, subservient to the promotion of human happiness. The hall is uniformly crowded, and a large proportion of the audience consists of females—a circumstance of itself highly promising. There cannot be a doubt entertained of the beneficial tendency of these meetings, or of the necessity which exists for their extension. Grinding labour and insufficient remuneration are the pillars on which our gin-palaces rest, and few things will contribute more to undermine and ultimately destroy them, than such Saturday-evening amusement. Combining as it does whatever is ennobling in science and morals, with all that is elevating in music, the working man is presented weekly with a treat hitherto almost exclusively enjoyed by the rich. And were proof wanting to establish the practicability of the scheme, it would be found in the unrivalled success which has attended the 'social meetings' of Glasgow."

We learn from a private note which accompanies the above, "that the number of individuals who now attend such meetings every Saturday evening in Glasgow, cannot be fewer than 1200." In order to give our readers as correct an idea as possible of the nature of these entertainments, we copy the programme of

proceedings for Saturday, October 13, at the Hall of the Mechanics' Institution.

PROGRAMME—FIRST PART.

Instrumental piece.
Glee, 3 voices, "The Witches," King.
Song, Mr Rodger, "June and January."
Duet, "Love and War," Cooke.
Instrumental piece.
Glee, 3 voices, "Barney's History."
Song, Mr Wilson, "The Rose will cease to blow," Gaylett.
Solo.
Song, Mr Rodger, "Oh, mither, ony body."
Catch, 3 voices, "Ah! how, Sophia," Calcott.
Instrumental piece.

LECTURE.

On the resemblance between Sound and Sense, in written and spoken language, by Mr A. M. Hartley.

PART SECOND.

Instrumental piece.
Glee, 3 voices, "The eough and crow," Bishop.
Song, Mr Rodger, "I had a hat."
Duet, "The minute-gun at sea," King.
Instrumental piece.
Glee, 3 voices, "Sanet Mungo," Turnbull.
Song, Mr Wilson.
Duet, "The Bracs abune Bunaw."
Instrumental piece.
Base Solo, Mr J. Drummond, "The Wolf," Shield.
Glee, voices.
Song, Mr Rodger, "The lassies a' leugh."
Finale, Glee, "Come, merry hearts."

HOSPITALITY ABUSED.

HOSPITALITY to strangers is a virtue which occupies a pleasing prominence in the brighter aspect of human nature. The privations and difficulties which beset so many of our kind in their mortal pilgrimage, multiply, to an indefinite extent, the occasions for the exercise of spontaneous and unpaid benevolence; and hence it is that this social duty has been warmly urged, and eloquently eulogised, by the wise and the good of every age. Unfortunately, circumstances occasionally occur which have a tendency to chill those hospitable feelings which it is our duty, as well as pleasure, to exercise. Witness the following incident.

Among the few stranger families who, in the summer months of the year 18—, resorted to a small Scottish burgh, appeared the family of an English gentleman, whom we shall for the time accommodate with the name, so universal in its application, of Captain Smith. The ostensible object of Captain Smith—Captain D'Arey Smith—in sojourning in the burgh, was to enjoy the salubrious air and romantic seclusion of its richly picturesque neighbourhood, and also to secure for his family, at an unexpensive rate, the educational advantages which the burgh afforded. He at first occupied a temporary lodging until he had time to look out for a more permanent residence. The captain's family consisted of his wife and five or six children—two of the boys about the ages of thirteen and fifteen, and two young ladies, just blooming into womanhood. The establishment was conducted upon the most economical footing, and in the eyes of the immediate neighbours seemed in some particulars so palpably defective, as to require explanations about "baggage to follow in due time from Carlisle," &c. &c., to maintain appearances. "The captain, good man," such was the surmise, "no doubt husbanded the ways and means with all the commendable frugality which the miserable pittance of the retiring pay department called for at the hands of such ill-starred defenders of their country." His courteous and gentlemanlike manners began imperceptibly to make an impression upon the kindly disposed community. This was favoured to some extent by his gaining the confidence of the medical gentleman of the place, who was called in to attend upon some ailments of the young people. The kindness which this gentleman and his family spontaneously lavished upon the gallant stranger, proved a channel of admission to the hearts and homes of the neighbouring residents. Mrs Smith had considerable powers of pleasing; with other southern accomplishments, she had no small skill in housewifery and the culinary art; and some happy efforts of the latter sort, in refurbishing simple materials under the form of "curry," or the fascinating disguise of a "potato pie à l'Anglaise," cemented in one case an intimacy of no small consequence. Some slight negotiations with the bank gave a colour of credibility to the captain's assumed status, and by degrees the shopkeepers opened accounts with him.

The Smiths were now getting every day more and more within the pale of friendly confidence. Few were the suspicious churls who still held out in distrust. There was indeed one old lady, who, from the chilling experience of eighty years, had the hardihood to cherish some unamiable doubts. In reference to the primitive mode in which their first arrival into the town was effected (it having been alleged that the family had made their *début* on foot, with their luggage in a sort of porter's carriage drawn by the boys: which report a friendly silence had allowed to drop

into oblivion)—in reference to this, the foresaid aged dame gave out, that she had great misgivings about the respectability of parties "who came to the town in a HURLY." Such a questionable agent of locomotion, sooth to say, might perhaps have justified more general distrust. However, the manifest gentility of the manners of the parties prevailed over all disparaging surmises. All the members of the family contributed their share towards the maintenance of their common credit. For instance, the boys paid a degree of deferential homage to age and worth, on meeting any of the more influential householders, which was most beautiful to behold, and which excited in their own favour an acceptable contrast, no doubt, with the unpolite rusticity of the urchins indigenous to the burgh. The young ladies were also zealously serviceable when there was any pressing call for the expeditious completing of feminine apparel—upon the occasion of a death, for example, or some such contingency befalling a neighbouring family. In an evening party, which the command of credit enabled them to give, the stranger beauties could regale the company with some winning melodies, which their considerate mamma spoke palliatively of, as merely artless "wood-notes wild." "Dear creatures! their musical education was so irregular." Every thing now moved on in the ordinary tenor of social intercourse. There was not the slightest appearance of the family having any thing to conceal. The good captain on one occasion, in order to satisfy a neighbour who was struck with the unwonted sound of his first name, spelt the letters with the most unreserved particularity—D, apostrophe, A, R, C, Y. As their first place of residence was engaged only till a more commodious habitation could be found, the captain hired a neat cottage and garden in the immediate neighbourhood of the town; and with a view to induce the landlord to make some desired improvements, such as putting in proper grates and stoves, he took a lease for a few years. Such proceedings bespoke the intention to make the place a permanent residence, and had their due effect in disarming the fears of cautious shopkeepers, who allowed the family's accounts to swell in their books. As was most proper, the Smiths, being from the southern part of the island, engaged seats in the Episcopal chapel, and soon, by their exemplary observance of all due forms, attracted the pastoral attentions of the clergyman, who had every reason to congratulate himself upon such a goodly accession to his fold. The system of credit, however, cannot subsist long upon mere promises and appearances, and the burgesses showed at length a clamorous anxiety "to see the colour of their money." But this impatience was for some time kept within seemly limits, by the circumstance of Mrs Smith having every appearance of being on the eve of a certain crisis of maternal interest, which was a matter of common talk in the families immediately adjoining. In contemplation of this event, the interesting lady returned one or two visits sooner, she hinted, than etiquette required.

Such was the state of matters, when one day a more than ordinary stillness seemed to pervade the residence of the Smiths. The neighbours began to wonder, but long forbore to disturb by their curiosity the quietness of the establishment. Reasons unknown might have occasioned such a monastic seclusion for the time being. Doubts, however, began to float about in whispers, which soon rose to loudly expressed murmurs of suspicion. A thorough inquiry was now authorised, and lo! upon forcing an entrance, the house was tenanted! To describe the agitation into which the town was thrown, when the escapee got wind, is beyond our power. The eyes of the citizens were in truth opened, and the reaction of popular execration against the refugees was prompt indeed. When the first storm of maledictions, "both loud and deep," had subsided, a Committee of Safety (as the Parisian republicans, in an overwhelming crisis, would designate it) was formed, and plenary powers given to certain individuals to pursue the denounced unfortunates. These commissioners lost no time in giving chase, and found that they had taken the high road in the direction of Carlisle. It was ascertained that the Smiths had taken a post chaise at the first posting quarters, having travelled the previous distance from the burgh in the same primitive way in which they had first entered it. The family had pushed on with all speed in the chaise, and succeeded in reaching Carlisle, whither their pursuers traced them. After an ineffectual search through various parts, they at length were descried in some low tavern in the purlieus of the town. The gallant captain protested against his identity with the hero of the burgh, and vehemently eschewed acknowledging that name, the letters of which he had conned over with such naïveté to his former unsuspecting neighbour. The appearance of the lady also revealed the intelligence, that the adroit disengagement of certain supplemental clothes had quite superseded that touching crisis which, more than any other circumstance, had paralysed the shrewd sagacity of the inhabitants, male and female, of the burgh. The young ladies, on the visit of the burghal plenipotentiaries, struck up a bravura of "wood-notes wild," with all the genuine pathos of alarmed sensibility. The boys, of course, squatted into modest retirement, leaving the field to more experienced hands.

The captain struggled boldly to baffle his pursuers on the score that Scotch warrants were powerless on English soil. But this sheet-anchor of his hope

was cut away, and at last the crest-fallen veteran was secured, and brought back in due course to the scene of his ingenious adventure. He preserved a dogged silence in the course of his journey; and finally he exhibited, in passing through the streets of the burgh, to the justly indignant citizens, a soul-sickening spectacle of hardened depravity. He was placed in confinement, and inquiries instituted as to the fate of the goods—such as were neither edible nor potable—with which he had stored his establishment out of the shops of the burgh. The result of the investigation proved that Captain Smith was no simple son of misfortune, but a deliberate and thorough-paced victimiser. No small portion of the indigestible goods alluded to had been packed up, sent to Edinburgh, and resold not long after they were got, in order to provide some little funds for carrying on the deception with a better grace, and also for executing the escapade with full-handed comfort. The captain remained for some months in prison. By communication with the War Office, he was authenticated as an officer who, for early misdeeds, had been degraded from superior rank, and still retained a curtailed allowance. The creditors made what settlement they could under the circumstances, and the subject of our story was at last liberated, to practise, it is to be feared, his miserable vocation in some other equally unsuspecting locality. As circumstances left little reason to doubt that the juniors of the family were privy to the whole course of deceit, the mind shrinks from contemplating the probable effect of such training upon the character and fate of these boys and girls.

From this story may be drawn the short and simple lesson, that "even the noble virtue of hospitality ought to take counsel from prudence."

SCRAPS FROM AMERICAN PAPERS.

PROPER MODE OF LITERARY WARFARE.

As soon as a man publishes his sentiments and opinions on any subject, they become fair marks of attack. Ridicule is a perfectly legitimate weapon, but must be confined to the publication itself, its language, or the views it contains. No personal allusion is, or can be, admissible. If a man puts forth what are conceived to be false or unsound doctrines, either in politics, law, or religion, let their fallacy be exposed. Knock the author on the head with an argument—run him through with a syllogism—show the absurdity of his opinions—attack them in prose or poetry, rhyme or blank verse. None of these can an independent press refuse. They are all legitimate modes of "wordy warfare." But personal abuse, and personal allusions, are wholly indefensible. They do no good, but, in nine cases out of ten, a great deal of harm to the very side they are intended to support. They promote not the cause of truth; they in fact destroy the beneficial effects that might otherwise result from free and independent discussion.

When newspapers fall out, it is remarkable how closely they imitate the foibles of commonplace humanity. They no longer make a mystery of their calling; they fling off the disguise of their avocation, and become the mere creatures of passion and impulse; like players in a country barn, who quarrel, cast away their mock habiliments, and fight out their brawl in the vulgar way. When one newspaper has had a difference with another, the animal sensitiveness of the porcupine is awoken, and the thousand quills of ridicule and opprobrium are put into active operation. The public, however, care very little about personal animosities or professional etiquette: the great mass of mankind remains perfectly unmoved by the shock that is rending the printing-office from end to end; and while editors are storming over the types, readers are placidly smiling at their folly. A quarrel is indicated thus: one journal says of another—"that vile organ of slander"—"that contemptible print"—"the wretched billingsgate of the *Hubbub Journal*"—"our degraded contemporary," &c.; which complimentary epithets are returned with interest by its opponent. At last the difference becomes reconciled; and the newspaper that but a few days before concentrated in its columns the worst elements of mischief and disgrace, becomes suddenly transformed into "our respectable contemporary, the *Hubbub Journal*"—"that well-informed print"—"decidedly one of the first of its class," &c.; in all which commendations the public takes as much interest as it did in the previous censorial criticisms. These are things of course—they have grown up with the vices of the press, and can only be expurgated by an editorial reformation, which is, perhaps, an unattainable millennium:—the fault is in human nature—in the common condition of mal-constructed [ill-regulated] minds.—*New York Mirror*.

AUTUMN.

Thou art with us. Already we feel the prickles in the morning air. And the stars shine with a peculiar lustre. Shortly, we shall see the rich tints which thou flingest on the woodlands, and then thy russet livery. And if thou art now bright, and gay, and beautiful, thou art not less lovely when thy hazy atmosphere spreads a voluptuous softness over nature—when the sun himself is shorn of his beams, and like a pale planet wanders through the sky.

Autumn! with all its fields of ripening corn, and its trees laden with fruit, and its vines with the clustering grapes

"Reeling to earth, purple and gushing," and clear, sparkling streams, and salmon-fishing, and field sports, is here.

Out in the Autumn woods! the broad leaf of the sycamore hath fallen upon the streamlet, and hath passed on with its tumbling water, or disports them where it has rosted against some obstruction. The buckeyes are bare. The maple is golden leaved, save where is spread, on a field of orange, the hectic flush which marks approaching decay, or where the sap is yet faintly coursing, and a

delicate green remains. The oak is of a deep crimson, and the gum even of a bloodier hue. Far off, on the tall cliff, is the spiral pine and cedar in their eternal green.

Out in the Autumn woods! when the leaves are falling like the flakes in a snow-storm. It is a time for reflection—it is a time for lofty contemplation. The soul is full, if it have the capacity to feel, and it gushes forth, though the tongue speaks not. And yet it is irresistible, to roam through the Autumn woods and listen to the thousand whispering tongues which fill the air. The fullness of feeling must be the merry shout and loud halloo.

We welcome the Autumn. Thou art the dearest to us of the seasons—save the flower month. We hail thy coming snow, not as has been our wont. Since thou wert last here, we have lost friends; and in thy wailing winds, and out beneath thy sky, and roaming through thy varied gorgeous-livered woods, our thought shall be turned to their memories.—*Louisville Gazette*.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

We have ever regarded the selection of a name for a child as a matter of considerable importance, as we believe it sometimes has an influence upon the future fortunes of the individual. We have often noticed names which we regarded as preposterous, but have seldom met with any more truly so than the following, which a friend of ours informs us are the identical names of a family of children in his neighbourhood. One little girl bears the romantic appellation of Belvidere Hyderella Deidamia Celestia Adelaide Wales Hutchkins. Her younger sister is denominated Pharis Parassina Celia Amelia Mary Abigail Hutchkins. The brother of these hopeful daughters is styled Daniel Horatio Leander Constantine Wales Hutchkins. The same gentleman informs us that another child in his acquaintance bears the following appellatives, partly borrowed from the name of the wife of the founder of Pennsylvania—Julia Elma Anne Maria Springet Penn Estes. All these, however, must yield, we think, to the following, which a lady on her honour assures us are the real names of two children. The first, Haneah Maria Rebecca Sophia Hazard Wizard Gizard Penelope Gardner. The second, Caroline Adeline Jane Eliza Jefferson Jackson Beersheba Collins. As the horticulturists exclaim of their mammoth vegetables, so we say—"bent this!"

UTILITY OF LIME IN PRESERVING FENCE POSTS.

Accident in some instances has led to the discovery that lime applied to wood preserves it from decay. The whitewashing of fences is practised, more as a substitute for paint and for appearance sake, than to prevent decay. Even this superficial mode of applying lime, is of some use in preserving wood. Having full confidence in the efficacy of lime as a preservative of wood, to make fence posts less subject to rot, I have this season, for the first time, used it as follows:—

I provided a number of narrow boards, about three feet long, of various breadths, and one inch thick, with a hole in the end of each. When the hole in the ground was ready for the reception of the post, some lime was put into it; on this lime the post was placed; some of the narrow boards were then selected, and placed to and around the post in the hole after the usual manner; and when filled, the boards were drawn out. This is done with greater facility, by putting a stick into the hole in the upper end of the board, by which it may be raised by a lever or pry, if too fast to draw out otherwise. The boards being all removed, fill the space they occupied with quick-lime: if but partially, it is better than if totally slaked, because as it slakes it will expand, and make the posts stand very firm. If altogether slaked, it also swells, and makes the posts quite secure. From three to five posts with hewn or uniform butts will require one bushel of lime. Boards to surround the post half an inch thick (and perhaps this thickness of lime may be sufficient) would not take half that quantity. The lime is all the additional expense, except the extra labour (which is very trifling) to be incurred by setting a fence, with that part of the posts in the ground enveloped in lime.

To prevent the ground from adhering to the posts at the surface, and occasioning their decay, this part being the one which generally first begins to rot, lime mortar is applied, plastering round the posts with an elevation adjoining to the wood. Into this mortar, gravel was pressed to prevent the rains from washing it away. This mortar may be applied at any time most convenient after the fence is made.—*Memoirs of Philadelphia*.

SCENE AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

The centenary of the establishment of this university was lately celebrated by the gentlemen who had been brought up in it. The *New York American* gives the following account of the summoning of the elder alumni to take their places in the procession:—"As the marshal of the day called the classes, it was deeply interesting and affecting to mark the result. 'The class of 1759' was called, but no one stepped forth, the sole survivor of that class, Judge Wingate, of Maine, now ninety-six years old, being unable to attend. When the class of 1774, two years before our existence as a nation, was called, a solitary individual presented himself—a venerable old man, with erect person, firm step, and elastic spirits, Mr Emery of Philadelphia, now in his eighty-sixth year, who had made the journey from Philadelphia for the sole purpose of assisting, after a lapse of sixty-two years since he left the college walls, at this august celebration. The Rev. Dr Ripley, a graduate of '76, when the colleges became the barracks of the soldiers of liberty, and the Rev. Dr Homer, of '77, joined Mr Emery, and the summons went on till, as modern times were approached, the summoned were swelled from single individuals, or a few and far between, to twenties and thirties in a class. The greetings of these companions of early days; the efforts at recognition; the fond and fervent recollections, not untinted with melancholy, which the meeting woke up; the inquiries, more implied than uttered, after the absent; the inquisitive countenances, rather than words, which seemed to ask after each other's welfare; constituted a scene not to be forgotten by any one who witnessed it."

NEGRO CONVERSATION.

Negro conversation, especially when it assumes a serious cast, is very often oddly classic—the pretension to the use of words beyond the power of comprehension, and often beyond the facilities of enunciation, is sometimes, too, very humorous. We overheard the other day a colloquy between a couple of "seeming sages." The subject of discourse appeared to have its origin in the persons of a coloured man, and a couple of boys, members of the whitewashing profession, passing up the other side of the street. "How you do Mester Pindar," bowing politely. "Ah, Annybull is dat you, well how is all de family—considerable hey, astonishing circumstruction ob de cosmogrammic nosterphere dis evening." "Very 'markable indeed Mester Pindar—Did you see de Nora Bralis de oder night—its flectionable stintation make de stars wink, and de moon to put on her nightcap," as Shakspear de poet sas. "Why you aint got dat practice of koaten po'try." "Hush, see—Yander, dere's pour Gustas Cesar Jones-es boys, and dere uncle, jes quit de daily ambro-cations—de boys cum in for pretty much of prop'ty." "No not de smallest quantity—see dat boy, de fore un, he name ahter de father—not a cent for him, and de young genulman be'ind wid de limperments ob his purfesshin in his hand—de bucket and de brush—not a cent for him." "Why lo-lo-luk heah, Annybull, wha-wh what you talken about—you don't say dat for factum doos ye?" "Certendy—I tells ye ne'er a one ob dem boys is (whispering) ne'er a one ob em's born in padlock; both of em legerd-main children!" Imagine the theatric start which Mr Pindar affected as he exclaimed, "Oh my purfettic sole (turning up his heel)—if I didn't think so—but is you sure." "Didn't he tell me so when he was whitewashin' dat house down dere wid de venson blinds." "Dat sews me up—good night Sah." "Good night."—*Baltimore paper*.

AN ORATOR AT A LOSS.

The following is a literal copy of a speech made at a debating society, in one of the western towns of Pennsylvania:—"Well—the subject to be excused is, whether ardent spirits does any good or not. I confer it don't. Jist think of our ancestors in future days—they lived to a most numerous age—so that I think that whisky nor ardent spirit don't do no good. (Long pause.) Well—the question to be excused is whether ardent spirits does any good or not—so that I include it don't. (Another long pause.) I can't get holt of the plaguy thing."

THE WEAVER'S SONG.

[From *Songs, Sonnets, and Miscellaneous Poems, by John and Mary Saunders, 1838.* The authors of this volume are, we understand, uneducated persons in humble life. The following piece is by John Saunders. We thought of saying something respecting it, but nothing is necessary. So touching and so true a picture of what every one sees every day, must speak for itself.]

Oh! can I forget as I bend o'er my loom,
So many long hours in this dark stifling room,
My boyhood's sweet time, when I roamed all the day,
Untamely glad as a bird in its play?

Oh! can I forget when my own darling wife
Is soothing her hungry ones, calming their strife;
Her tears rolling down as she thinks of their fate;
How light-hearted, hopeful her maidenly state?

Oh! can I forget with what hope and what pride
I saw in the future a merry fireside;
Where our old age should rest in the cradle of home,
Where our children all should at holidays come?

Alas! for the boyhood for ever departed—
Alas! for the maiden so hopeful, light-hearted—
Alas! for the home and the merry ones nigh—
God help us! we're born but to toil and to die.

THE FARMER'S TROUBLES.

The farmer is a man of many sorrows. In January the verdure of his infant wheat blesses his eyes—in March it is drawn from the ground by the alternate frosts of the night, and the thaws of a mid-day sun—and in April it looks like a piebald horse. His care and precaution may poison the snout, but the seeds of the mildew may be cherished by moist weather in August; they are perhaps every where, and may be blown from his neighbour's hedge often when he thinks the day is his own. The rains in September spoil the finest crop, by springing the grain in the ear; the oats are eradicated by the grub and wire worm; they are stunted by the drought in summer; shaken by the winds, rotted by the rains, and blasted by the frosts in winter. He sows his barley early, and it is choked by runches, or the young grasses; he sows it later, and it is withered by the east wind in May; he drives it in early, and the calm before the equinoctial gales makes it heat in the stack; he lets it remain longer in the stack, but the storm comes some day sooner than usual, and soaks the sheaves to the heart; it springs, and the brewer refuses to give money for it. By dint of great exertion of man and horse he gets a field of turnips finished on a Saturday night, and on the third Sunday of June he walks out in the morning to meditate, and look at a park he had sown the week before. The morning sun shines alant the field; and as he sees each drill striped with a small line of young plants, his eyes glisten as he rejoices in the success of his industry. Eight days after he comes again; but his turnips are devoured by the jumping beetle. In his other fields they grow and prosper; he amuses himself, after a fatiguing day, with reckoning what money they will return him, when he shall have sold his bullocks in April, well fed, have his ewes well lambed, and his hogs in good condition; but a black frost, in December, settles the account in quite another way.—*Provincial Newspaper*.

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